



King's Speech 2024:

RCSLT analysis

17 July 2024

Introduction

The [King's Speech](#) was delivered on Wednesday, 17 July 2024. It set out the Government's legislative plans for the year ahead. It also includes other non-legislative policy proposals.

Below is a summary of announcements that are relevant to people with communication and/or swallowing needs and their families. In these areas, and more, speech and language therapists have a key role to play in delivering the legislative and non-legislative changes that the Government wishes to make.

We look forward to working with MPs and members of the House of Lords, our members, people having speech and language therapy, and partner organisations to influence these Bills and policies so that they:

- improve the lives of people with communication and/or swallowing needs and their families, and seek to prevent, delay, or ameliorate, these conditions arising in the first place;
- enable the expansion of training opportunities for the next generation of speech and language therapists through both traditional degree routes and the degree apprenticeship; and
- maximise the contribution and impact of speech and language therapy.

Justice

On justice, The King announced a Crime and Policing Bill and a Victims, Courts and Public Protection Bill. Part of this is designed to strengthen support for victims. ***We are calling for that to include ensuring that those who communicate differently or with difficulty receive the support they require to enable them to communicate in the way that suits them best so they can access and engage with relevant services and processes at every stage of the criminal justice system.***

On the non-legislative front, The King also announced that the Government plans to halve violence against women and girls. ***It is crucial to acknowledge that communication***

differences or needs can increase the risk of abuse and create barriers to reporting and receiving support, particularly in domestic or sexual abuse and attempted homicide cases. We are calling for action plans to highlight how people with communication differences or needs will be identified and supported. We are also calling for good practice models to emphasise the importance of recognising and appropriately supporting these people.

Education

On education, The King announced a Bill to raise standards in education and promote children's wellbeing, the Children's Wellbeing Bill. *It is welcome that the Bill will look at both education and wellbeing. Given the role that many healthcare professionals play in supporting children's education and wellbeing, we are calling for there to be close working between the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care on the Bill.*

The King also announced a Skills England Bill. This will establish Skills England which will have a new partnership with employers at its heart. The Government also plans to reform the apprentice levy. *We are calling for action to be taken to better support the expansion of allied health professional and speech and language therapy pre-registration degree apprenticeships by providing backfill for services while apprentices are in academic training. We also calling for the same apprenticeship opportunities in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, where pre-registration degree apprenticeships are not currently available.*

Health and Social Care

On health and social care, The King said that the Government will seek to improve the National Health Service as a service for all, providing care on the basis of need regardless of the ability to pay. It will seek to reduce waiting times, focus on prevention, and improve mental health provision for young people. It aims to ensure that mental health is given the same attention and focus as physical health. *We are calling for the pivotal role of community-based NHS rehabilitation to be recognised as central in supporting better health and wellbeing and enabling people to remain independent, and return to work, education, or activities, and social situations.*

The King announced the Government's intention to modernise the Mental Health Act through a Mental Health Bill. *We welcome this commitment to update the existing Mental Health*

Act. We are calling for the reforms to have support for speech, language and communication needs at their centre so that people can understand and be understood when accessing mental health services.

The King also announced that legislation will be brought forward to introduce a duty of candour for public servants, the Hillsborough Law.

Other measures

The Government will propose a modernisation committee of the House of Commons which will be tasked with driving up standards, improving work practices and reforming procedures.

We welcome this proposed committee and are calling for it to deliver the [inclusive Parliament](#) that we, STAMMA, the Co-op, Disability Rights UK, the Michael Palin Centre, and hundreds of people called for before the election.

More information on The King's Speech is available in the Government's [dedicated briefing](#).